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ANDREW ATKINSON HUMPHREYS,

OF PENNSYLVANIA,

BRIGADIER GENERAL AND BREVET MAJOR GENERAL, U. S. A.,

MAJOR GENERAL, U. S. V.,

CHIEF OF STAFF AND COMMANDER OF THE
COMBINED SECOND-THIRD CORPS,
ARMY OF THE POTOMAC,

CHIEF OF ENGINEERS, U. S. A.



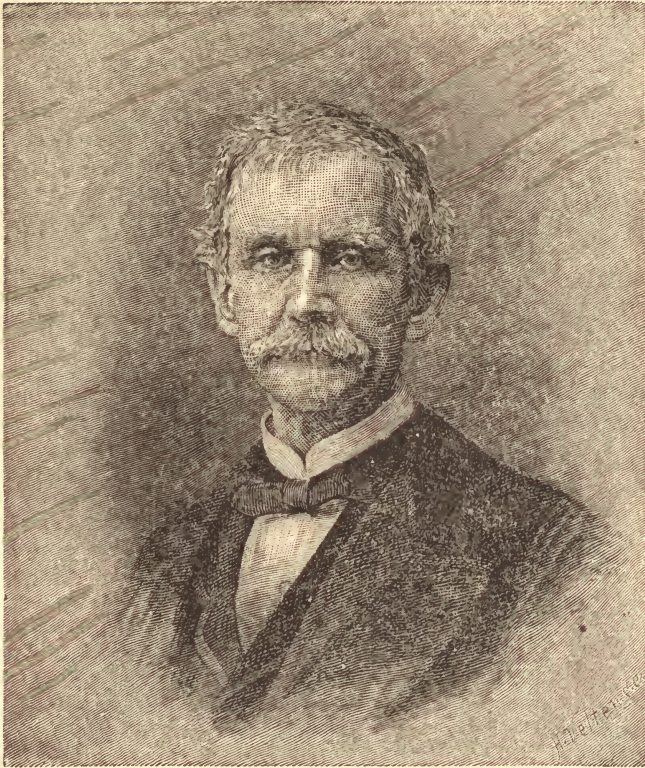
By BREVET MAJOR GENERAL J. WATTS DE PEYSTER,
HONORARY MEMBER DIAGNOTHIAN LITERARY SOCIETY, FRANKLIN AND MARSHALL COLLEGE,
LANCASTER, PENNSYLVANIA.

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ANDREW ATKINSON HUMPHREYS.



TAKEN IN HIS LATER YEARS, WHEN ABOUT 63.

PART FIRST.

"A true friend is distinguished in the crisis of hazard and necessity; when the gallantry of his aid may show the worth of his soul and the loyalty of his heart."
—*Ennius.*

"Trust on thy friend, deliberate with thyself;
Pause, ponder, sit; not eager in the choice,
Nor jealous of the chosen; fixing, fix;
Judge before friendship, then confide till death."
—*Young.*

"Rest, soldier, rest! thy weary task is done;
Thy God, thy country, thou has served them well;
Thine is true glory—glory bravely won;
On lips of men unborn thy name shall dwell.

"Live! live on fame's bright scroll, heroic friend!
Thy memory now we to her record give,
To earth, thy dust; our thoughts to heaven ascend,
Where with the immortals, thou dost ever live!"
—*Palmer.*

[In a limited space it is next to impossible to do more than to refer to the services ren-

dered to his country by this distinguished officer, since their mere mention fills Article No. 641, Graduating Class, of 1831, two pages, 384, 385, 386, Vol. 1, of the "Biographical Register of the Officers and Graduates of the U. S. Military Academy at West Point, N. Y., from its establishment, March 16, 1802, to the Army Re-organization of 1866-'67," by Brevet Major General Geo. W. Cullum, Colonel Corps of Engineers, U. S. Army, Vol. 1, 1802-1840. New York, D. Van Nostrand, 192 Broadway, 1868:" and in it each statement of service is so abbreviated in briefer or smaller type that simply to reprint them in full in larger type would occupy eight pages of this

magazine. Consequently this sketch must be much more general than that of Wayne, because although Wayne's services extended over a much longer period, and although they were of absolute and decisive importance, the labors of Humphreys were of far greater magnitude, proportional to the development of the country, and whereas Washington as General-in-Chief never commanded an army larger than a strong division or depleted corps, Humphreys, when Brigadier, was at the head of a division as large as Washington's army on most occasions, and, as a Major General, of a corps far more formidable than all the forces Washington ever controlled. While as chief-of-staff he, and he alone, formulated the orders governing the operations of the Army of the Potomac—an army which comprised ten times more men than Washington had at Monmouth, the field to which he brought the most and best in quantity and quality that he ever had.]

THE question must often occur to reflecting minds: What is the secret of human success? The proverb is almost universally impressed upon the minds of youth in civilized countries that "Honesty is the best of policy." Towards God it certainly is. Towards men is it? If in the latter case it were not of doubtful truth another proverb would not hold universally good: "Nothing succeeds like success." If success were the worldly test or reward of merit, virtue would not ever be found upon the scaffold and vice upon the throne.

"Truth forever on the scaffold, wrong forever on the throne."

This ultimately resolves itself into the sugar-coated pill that "Virtue is its own reward;" a recompense pretty much all that it gets on earth. This result is certainly very unsatisfactory and does not afford wholesome food for consideration. The idea of transferring the reward of merit to another world is a pretty hard system of justice for those who have not a sufficient strength of character—which is often the result of physical defects or deficiencies—to endure the wrongs so eloquently set forth in Hamlet's soliloquy. Emperors and Popes and Generals and Governors who have risen to

the highest fame and fortune have in the majority of cases been more or less absolute monsters of iniquity. Constantine, who organized the Christian Church, was a criminal of the deepest dye. Napoleon Bonaparte, almost deified, was a tissue of meanness, falsehood and cruelty, not possible to be redeemed by even the vast ability credited to him, but which in reality he did not possess. In very fact, there is scarcely a hero whose success will bear the probe or touchstone of truth. What is more, if time vindicates and redresses, it is very seldom that good men survive to profit by the re-velution of public opinion in their favor; and there is no passage in the Bible, the superlative of common sense, which is so suggestive of painful thought as the Verse 10 of Chapter xi of Revelations, where the slain witnesses are represented under the altar asking: "How long before judgment and vengeance?" In this very country how often have the honest minority beheld the baser candidate elevated over the far better man higher and higher to office; and how often have Generals who have saved a State been superseded by men superior alone in political influence, effrontery or fraud? The Mortuary List of Generals who have perished on the battle-field is very numerous, but its startling aggregate becomes a much more worthy object of contemplation when it is found to comprise so many who were the victims of a broken heart; that is to say, the victims of ingratitude, injustice and crime.

It is a painful consideration, but the list has been growing larger and larger ever since humanity has possessed anything like authentic annals. The presentation of striking examples would constitute a most interesting book, and the only consolation which attends the contemplation is the equanimity of the stoic who looks upon everything as the result of "inevitable law" established at first, then developed and still developing so that the very divergencies which men regard as exceptions are the germs of new laws destined in time to produce another harvest of seed adapted to other and remote conditions of the world. The only present panacea for all the evils which are daily witnessed is that the Supreme Ruler must be just, because Almighty Power and Wisdom are inconsistent with injustice. It is that faith, that living hope which is almost equivalent to absolute faith, which alone can sustain a man who has sufficient clearness of vision to perceive and comprehend the littlenesses by which men, esteemed great,

become so in the eyes of the multitude. It might almost be safe to defy honest scrutiny to point out a single individual who has risen to power and fame by the unassisted force of his own individual merit. Men are the creatures of circumstances without the slightest power over the circumstances which make and unmake them.

Among the ablest of our "Men of War," our "Great Captains"—grand terms if properly understood—the ablest and most meritorious in all respects certainly did not attain the prominence that their capacity merited or that their services deserved. The most marked example among these was undoubtedly George H. Thomas; although the country is gradually coming to the knowledge of what a superlative soldier, general and citizen he was. Another man who did not enjoy the opportunity of exhibiting his full force was A. A. Humphreys—kept down in an even greater degree by his own modesty than he was prevented from rising by unhappy prejudices. Major General Andrew Atkinson Humphreys was great as a scientific and practical engineer; equally great as a division commander; even greater as the chief of staff of the grandest army of the Republic; and greatest as the head of a splendid corps, as a planner, director and fighter. Well might one of our most popular major-generals, who came near being the head of the nation, declare that if he was an absolute monarch and could dispose of a large army he knew no one to whom he would entrust its direction and leadership with such perfect confidence as Humphreys. On the other hand, one of the leaders of the Rebellion, in many respects its Arch-magus, after the four successive changes in the command of the Army of the Potomac, observed: "They have not got the right man yet, and they never will have him until they appoint Andrew Atkinson Humphreys."

An officer of high rank in the Rebel army, who occupied a very conspicuous position, a hard military student, and practically well versed in military operations, remarked in substance, that "while he looked upon Hancock as the best fighter in the Army of the Potomac, Humphreys was best fitted to command it."

In regard to soldiers an expression is sometimes used which, perhaps, is the most complimentary possible, that is, styling an officer a "*duty-man*." Wayne was certainly such, and in comparing the portrayal of his character and deeds with those of the hero of the present sketch, a very close resemb-

lance will be found; Wayne was one, Humphreys was another duty-man.

"Humphreys' leadership and soldiership—was the attest of a veteran observer—were so unobtrusive that the country was not aware of what an able man it possessed in him."

A Major-General—himself very distinguished, experienced and esteemed—who occupied a position which gave him the amplest opportunities of judging—said that he "considered Humphreys, take him all in all, the best General in the Army of the Potomac, or best fitted to command it."

The same remark was made by other prominent eyewitnesses, with the additional commendation that "if Humphreys had enjoyed a more influential position the Northern people would have enjoyed many more occasions to rejoice. This must have been the case if the power of handling large bodies of troops; if rare science and its test, application; if calmness and clearness of judgment under fire; if energy, undaunted courage and self-forgetfulness in view of results have any effect upon military operations."

Another officer, whose peculiar, varied and constant service gave him unusual advantages for judging and comparing, said a very handsome thing of Humphreys. "For general, as well as intimate acquaintance with the country in which he (Humphreys) was operating, and the troops against whom he was engaged—in fact, the general relative situation of affairs, Humphreys was second to no other Union general."

"Humphreys was wonderful in his power of seeing what had to be done and of doing it promptly. He was a consummate handler of troops, [out of fire and under fire] as witness before [and amid] the culminating shock on the second [THE] day of Gettysburg."

From his usual quiescent suavity, he was metamorphosed into the impersonation of enthusiasm in action. "General Humphreys," wrote a gallant soldier (17, 12, 72), afterwards occupying an important civil position, "holds a place in my estimation as a soldier whose skill, bravery and modesty are second to none, and whose real service was infinitely more valuable than that of many officers more talked about in the newspapers."

"Take him all in all, soldiership, culture, science, generalship, manners, lines of thought, social relations, disposition, intention and energy, friendship and affection, he realized the words of another unfortunate,

the poet, George Brookford, singing over the grave of a national hero

“The noble heart, the master mind,
The chief that knew no fear,
And leaves no warrior peer behind,
Lies, sleeping soundly, here.

When riding 'mid the battle's blaze,
His eye with soul afire,
The traitor foe stood still to gaze,
And wonder and admire.”

“A high ideal of excellence,” according to Ram's ‘Philosophy of War,’ in any individual involves combativeness and readiness to suffer. *The great soldier, who has also the brains to be a great civilian and the heart of a good man, is the highest of human beings.* Such men have been rarely seen. Alexander, in spite of the vices of his day, approached this ideal. Napoleon missed it through having a petty heart.” There was nothing petty in *our* hero, Humphreys; but, on the contrary, everything grand, the grandest!

It is a false but favorite idea with the people of these United States that there is no advantage in ancestry and birth.* The ignorant, uneducated masses—for the masses are so, let demigods assert to the contrary as often and loudly as they please—are so profoundly ignorant that they do not remember, or know, that the term “*aristocracy*” does not imply the might or right to govern, derived through the simple advantage of birth, but signifies the rule of the “best born” in all that best born signifies. (See Myer's Mazzini, 23). Socrates—according to Xenophon—would say: “That when the chief offices of the commonwealth were lodged in the hands of a small number of the most *eminent* citizens, it was called an aristocracy.” In this, (the correct sense), aristocracy has nothing to do with the physical among men, although its advantages are acknowledged in horses and cattle, but the best-born, through hereditary genius, the simple bed-rock truth of one of the most misunderstood expressions in our language, the “Survival of the Fittest,”—that “Hereditary Genius” is a fact, is a problem solved. The *direct* transmission of superior qualities may be open to question, but the *indirect*, in one sense, although perfectly direct in another, is as irrefutable as that light may come to us from the sun through various mediums, but yet it is light, and it is the light of the sun.

*See Dr. Geo. H. Naphey's chapter on “Atavism,” and “Inheritance of Talent and Genius,” and “Sayings of the Great and Good,” and “Distinction between Opinion and Truth.”

Everyone who has visited that remarkable Gothic structure, the Church of St. Eustache, in Paris, must have seen near the great door a monument, which commemorates one of the ablest and least known generals who have illustrated the history of France—Francois de Chevert. The inscription on it has been celebrated by Mercier and is attributed to Diderot. A portion of the inscription runs thus:

“He rose, in spite of envy, by the
force of merit,
and every promotion was purchased by a distinguished
action:—
the single title of Marshal of France
was wanting to him not to his glory, but to the ex-
ample of those who will take him as a
model for emulation.”

If for the words of “Marshal of France” be substituted “Commander-in-Chief of the Armies of the United States,” this part of the inscription would be as applicable to Humphreys as to Chevert.

The apologue of the Russian philosopher, Tourgenieff, exhibiting the deserving poet rejected by his compatriots, who triumphantly crowned a fortunate rival—a rival who had actually stolen the former's verses—is equally pertinent to CHEVERT and to HUMPHREYS. The latter was so great a man—so exceptionally great a man—“because he covered so much space so far, in so many directions, and because, unlike most men who are distinguished in only one or two directions, he was a wonderfully capable man in a variety of directions, in scarcely one of which, and at rare intervals, individuals made a decided mark.”

A cynical critic, although a man of experience and study, summed up the character of Humphreys soon after the war, 1869, as aptly as concisely, “as a fighting division commander; as a proficient in the handling of a corps; as a consummate chief-of-staff of the Army of the Potomac; as an intrepid gentleman; as a faithful soldier; and as a remarkable engineer General Humphreys had no superior. His survey and reports upon the Mississippi will be as proud a memorial of his engineering capacity as his military record, beginning with the Florida War, in 1836,—a record which is without a stain, as rich in historic deeds and services as ‘the sacred shield of Lancelot.’”

It is such a full and rounded life as that of Humphreys which justifies the lines of Tennyson, and a belief in a continuation of individuality beyond the grave:

Though world on world, in myriad myriads roll
Round us, each with different powers,

And other forms of life than ours,
What know we greater than the soul?

He is gone, who seemed so great—
Gone but nothing can bereave him
Of the force he made his own
Being here, and we believe him
Something far advanced in state.

Yes! it is a career like that of the subject of this sketch that makes a "Thinker,"—who may have doubted the Immortality of Man as an invention of priestcraft, and as a delusive hope,—come decidedly to the conclusion that Divine Wisdom is never guilty of waste, and therefore there must be some utilization of aggregated and perfected forces, for which—reasoning by analogy—individuality could scarcely be permitted to cease at death? Major-General J. W. Phelps, U. S. V., of Vermont, arrived at the same judgment by a somewhat different course of reasoning. He thought that some men by individual force and growth, petrified themselves, so to speak, into a condition capable of resisting the change from what is styled life into death, but he considered this power very restricted in its application and operation. Humphreys based *his* faith in the individual immortality of the soul upon the belief that a creation like man after a long life of usefulness involving continual improvement and accumulation of various knowledge valuable to his kind, must continue to exist an *Ego*, or else the magazine had been filled in vain, which is inconsistent with the intelligence—Seneca's "Universal Reason"—which formed and regulates the universe. He himself was an example of the truth of this idea, if ever a notable example did exist. A great and at the same time a good man, who attained the ripest age with undiminished faculties; a magnificent soldier who combined the calmest intrepidity with executive ability in battle; a mind capable of working with the nicest precision amid the wildest churm of conflict under exceptional circumstances of peril; a scientist of views most comprehensive and practical; of knowledge vast and developed: that "a *marked* combination such an aggregate of excellence not to be "far advanced in state," after death, would infer an absurdity on the part of superlative Wisdom and Power." It would be equivalent to filling a store-house with the most precious commodities simply to destroy it and them by a sudden death, catastrophe or stroke, as in the case of Humphreys, or to suffer them to go to waste through protracted disease, as is ordinarily the case. Nature allows no such destruction and knows no such waste.

The author of a very remarkable book, "Sketches of Creation," truthfully observes, "The blood of the thousands and hundreds of thousands who fell on the hundred fiercely contested fields of the 'Great Rebellion,' and the tracés of the manful struggles which they waged, were all washed out by the next spring's rains, while even the ripple-marks of the age of Saurians, and the impression of the rain-drops of the passing shower, are perpetuated in all their distinctiveness through ages. *Man's history is not written on rocks and river shores. His monuments are not foot-marks imprinted on the soil and sands of earth, but achievements of moral and intellectual labor, less perishable than the visible records of the ancient Saurians, because inwrought into the lineaments of the indissoluble soul.*"

These too eloquent remarks are both applicable and inapplicable to Major-General Andrew Atkinson Humphreys—applicable in the grander and broader, inapplicable in the restricted sense. It was under the grander scope of vision that our hero, "a scientific soldier," as he was elegantly styled by Major J. M. Bundy, editor of the *Mail and Express*, so greatly exceeds in enduring reputation his peers in rank and his superiors in command. "Man's History," says Alexander Winchell, "[as a rule] is not written on the rocks and river shores." This man's (Humphreys's) *is* written on *both*, "on rocks and river shores." In the former case "on rocks" through his Explorations and Surveys for Railroads from the Mississippi to the Pacific Ocean, and Geographical Explorations west of the Mississippi from 1854 to 1861; and "on river shores" through the "Topographical and Hydrographical Survey of the Delta of the Mississippi River" a voluminous report, of world-wide celebrity, translated and retranslated six or seven times abroad in 1848-'51, and in his "Examination of the Mississippi Levees," 1865 and 1866.

What is more and better for the purpose of this article, the labors of Humphreys do exemplify the magnificent truth of the preceding quotation which, for emphasis, will bear repetition: "His monuments are not [only] footmarks imprinted on the soil and sands of earth, but achievements of moral and intellectual labor, less perishable than the visible records of the ancient Saurians, because inwrought into the lineaments of the indissoluble soul."

Humphreys resigned from the army 30th September, 1836, but demonstrated his pos-

session of such rare qualities, he was reappointed 7th July, 1838, to a far better position.

Thus he did much better for himself by resigning than if he had remained continuously in the discharge of regular professional routine. During the ensuing twenty-two years his "Statement of Service" is a continuous record of scientific triumphs, and, as hereinbefore stated, his survey of the Mississippi and calculation of the dynamics of its floods—the effects of inundations, the restraints and remedies—are to this day a "bonanza" of the most precious facts, deductions and directions for every country of which the scientific administrations have to grapple with difficulties of a similar character. His publications are caskets filled with "Pure and precious pearls of splendid thought," and are recognized as of unexceeded value throughout the civilized world.

It is scarcely necessary to say more, even, when so much remains to be said, but the attest of such a witness as Colonel William H. Paine is worthy of citation. Colonel Paine was literally the "Pathfinder" of the Army of the Potomac, who did more dangerous duty in exploring the difficult region of Virginia, and served repeatedly with more generals than any other officer in the national forces. Having had so many opportunities for observation and comparison, his judgment is that of an expert of the first-class. He is always exuberant in his eulogies of Humphreys, a praise echoed and endorsed by men of every rank, who had the honor and glory to serve with such a perfect specimen of the real gentleman and exemplar of a commander. After the war he wrote as follows: "Humphreys' leadership and soldieryship were so unobtrusive that the country is not aware of what an able man he is."

* * * * *

There are many eminent philosophers who have argued against "hereditary genius," claiming that the truth of this rule is not demonstrated by the examples of history; but, if so, Humphreys is a notable exception to its falsity. His grandfather, likewise his father, were unsurpassed naval architects, and to the former is due the conception of those frigates "74s (or line of battle ships) in disguise," which redeemed the failures and disgraces of the American land forces, by triumphs that are immortal in their unexpected and extraordinary results. With a preference for the army—which is curious in the sons of men who have distinguished themselves in connection with the navy—

young Humphreys elected to enter the Military Academy.

Here limited space renders it necessary to postpone any farther consideration of the military actions of General Humphreys during the Great American Conflict. His Statements of Services must appear as a separate article. They are worthy of study, because he was not only a scientific but an enthusiastic soldier, who literally lived another and higher life amid the terrors and horrors, the dangers and demands of battle. There, he was indeed alive—calmly, grandly, efficiently alive. Physically and morally it is true of him what is narrated of Nelson, when asked if on one occasion Fear had not influenced his conduct, he said: "I have never met Fear." In one of his letters to the writer he suddenly breaks out, filled with fond memories of the joys of battle (*guadia certamini*), and portrays his sensations with a vivid force of language which present living pictures (*tableaux vivants*) of scenes which he held, constituted the superlative of the sublime.

* * * * *

The war being entirely over 18th August, 1866, Humphreys was made Chief-of-Engineers, the highest and most honorable scientific position in the country, and, in 1879, having reached the legal term of active service, he was retired, bearing with him out of office the "respect, admiration and love" of every one who had had, or enjoyed, private, civil, or military relations with him. Having done actions worthy of Cæsar in the field, he took up his pen and wrote a volume of commentaries entitled "The Virginian Campaign of '64 and '65," published by Charles Scribner's Sons in 1883, worthy to rank in the same class with those of the Cæsar whose executive soldieryship he had emulated. Shortly after, a short Supplementary volume was published, also by Charles Scribner's Sons, *supplementary* to their regular series, but *introductory* to the last and twelfth number of it, so as to present as concisely as is consistent with clearness the operations of the Army of the Potomac from Gettysburg to Appomattox Court House. The first military treatise which has survived in accordance with the inevitable law which applies to all things, "The survival of the fittest," is a Chinese work, bearing date B. C. 600. About 275 B. C., Pyrrhus, the Frederic the Great of antiquity, produced a Book on Tactics—"Treatise on the Art of War"—of which nothing much is known beyond its reputation among military magnates. This was extant within the time of Cicero. Just

before the Advent, Cæsar's "Commentaries" appeared. A second gap of over 800 years occurred, until the Emperor Leo VI. produced a "Summary of the Military Art," containing lessons which can never be inapplicable. About 1361, Timour or Tamerlane composed his "Commentaries of the Cæsar of the East" and "Institutions of the Empire." Timour was a great soldier and had a finely organized army, admirably uniformed, strange to say, and equipped. Another silence of a little more than a century was broken, at the West, by the "Rosier de Guerres," attributed to one of the most misjudged, misrepresented and maligned monarchs, Louis XI. of France, who, nevertheless, gave the first impulse to real progress in national, municipal and military administration. Shortly after, Montluc's "Soldiers' Breviary" was printed, which even Napoleon considered worthy of citation. In the eighteenth century, Frederic the Great published his War Histories and "Instructions for his Generals," &c., which are models in many respects. Before the "Wars produced by the French Revolution" had closed, von Bulow, a genius, and Jomini, a man of mere talent, placed before the world military treatises and criticisms which need no more than mention. Humphreys is in some regards "*Cæsar redivivus*;" in others, Frederic the Great; in others, again, Jomini. His Manual of War, for brevity in style, will live an authority as long as an army continues to be a national necessity. While engaged in preparing a revised and enlarged edition of his Military Treatise, without a visible symptom of decay, the light of his life went out, instantly, without a flicker.

Such a sudden and peaceful manner of death, contrary to general opinion, is by no means as uncommon as is usually supposed. James de Lancey, the celebrated Colonial Governor of New York, died in exactly the same way. My great-grandfather, who married his sister, has left on record that, called to his side by the alarm of his illness, he found on his arrival that the Governor was already dead. "*He sat reclining in his easy chair, one leg drawn in, the other extended; his arms over the elbows so naturally that had I not been apprised of it I certainly should have spoken as I entered the room.*"

Identical in the circumstances of the above was the decease of Francis W. Edmonds, a member of note of the National Academy of Designs. He was found seated in his "easy chair near his own bed—in that position, dead."

Perhaps, however, a still more exact parallel is found in the case of "the illustrious Nestor of the Chemical Revolution," Dr. Joseph Black.

"*Thus we spin out the thread of life to the last fibre.* It was his generous and manly wish that he might never live to be a burden to his friends; and never was the wish more completely gratified, on the 26th of November, 1799, and in the seventy-first year of his age, he expired without any convulsion, shock or stupor to announce or retard the approach of death. Being at table with his usual fare—some bread, a few prunes, and a measured quantity of milk diluted with water, and having the cup in his hand when the last stroke of the pulse was to be given, he had set it down upon his knees, which were joined together, and kept it steady with his hand in the manner of a person perfectly at ease, and in this attitude expired, without spilling a drop, and without a writhe in his countenance, as if an experiment had been required to show his friends the facility with which he had departed. The servant opened the door to tell him that some one had left his name, but getting no answer, stepped about half-way toward him, and seeing him sitting in that easy posture, supporting his basin of milk with one hand he thought that he had dropped to sleep, which he had sometimes seen happen after his meals. The man went back and shut the door, but before he got down stairs, some anxiety that he could not account for made him return and look again at his master. Even then he was satisfied, after coming pretty near, and turned to go away, but again returned, and coming quite close, found his master without life."

The following extract from a letter will present the peculiar peacefulness of General Humphrey's unexpected decease. Such a termination of a life which had been devoted to science over fifty years of the severest, and continual draughts upon the brain fibres is, as stated, not exceptional.

"The General left Washington on the 1st of August last, (1883), taking our daughter to Utica, and then went to Newport, where he intended to remain until September, or later, if the weather was not too warm to return. He never looked better or seemed better than when he left; but knowing how the heat prostrated him, and fearing it, he thought it best to make the change. The summer throughout with us was delightfully cool, no undue heat such as he feared we would have, and which apprehension caused him to leave. The summer at Newport proved to be cold and disagreeable, and at the end of two weeks he returned and enjoyed the comforts and warmth at home. He had taken cold from being subjected to the draughts of cold air in the hotel. He looked and felt badly, but very soon gained in appearance and health. On the 21st of September he left for Detroit, to bring our daughter home. She had gone from Utica to Detroit with her friend to pass some time with her there. On their return they stopped at Niagara for one day and night. The weather had changed and become very cold. He again took cold, which settled in his back causing lumbago, from which he suffered for some time after his return. He remained for two days in bed, and it seemed to have almost left him, and more from prudence, and to satisfy [his family] he remained in his room for at least ten days. The doctor prescribed

the electric battery, which certainly relieved him. From that time he appeared as well as he usually did, but would say repeatedly: 'I do not know why I should feel so weak; but when the spring comes I will ride on horseback, and will live more in the open air. There were two things which his family noticed, and which caused them some anxiety; but as he seemed so well and so bright, and enjoyed his meals, eating more than he generally had done, they dismissed the anxiety, thinking it was only my undue solicitude. They were these: First, I noticed at times a flushing of the face. This was unusual, for he was generally pale. Other persons, it seemed, had noticed an extreme pallor. The second thing was, he appeared to find the heat of the room oppressive, and would shut off the registers, would find his clothes oppressive and would be constantly changing them for lighter ones, so that it was remarked to him that his temperament was certainly changing. All this was a very decided change, and one which did cause anxiety, by which is meant that age at last was making its changes. The weather previous to that terrible night had been for three or four days very cold and disagreeable, rainy, damp, penetrating, so that he did not go out—saying, 'I feel tired, and it is so disagreeable I think I will lie down and not go out,' which he had done. That afternoon, the 27th [December, 1883,] he came from his office to sit with my daughter and myself, coming about 4 o'clock, saying, 'I have the lumbago again!' suggested applying the battery, which was done at 5 o'clock. He did not feel it as actively as he had heretofore done, so that we increased its strength, but although feeling it more, it was not as actively felt as heretofore, but he said 'it had made him feel better.' It was then nearly 6 o'clock, our dinner hour. The family went to dinner, which was enjoyed much. The evening was passed in the parlor, as usual, reading papers, etc., and conversing also, when about a quarter past 10 o'clock we finally left him looking over a pictorial magazine, which was rather amusing. I remarked as I left him: 'I have opened all the registers;' to which he replied: 'Very well.' He generally followed us up stairs in about five or ten minutes. Finding he did not come after some time, the family felt very much disposed to call him, telling him that he would become so wide-awake if he read much longer that he would not sleep, but refrained from doing so, thinking it might annoy him. At a quarter of 11 o'clock the servant came up to say the General was asleep in the parlor; should she wake him? The reply was: 'Certainly, wake him.' A scream from the one who remained down stairs to waken him, soon took me to him, to find, alas, that he was no longer living. The head rested on the back of the chair (a large chair), the paper had fallen to the floor. The glass (a small magnifying one) was still held in his hand, both hands resting on his knees. There was no trace of pain; there had been no sound, no call, for it must have been heard, for all the doors were open. He simply

fell asleep, without knowing that he had done so. As all warmth had fled, I suppose had we remained five minutes longer with him we should have known or been with him when it occurred. I gave instantly, as soon as I could collect my thoughts, brandy—mustard—but, of course, of no avail. The spirit had fled. The servant went instantly for the doctor, who soon arrived, but all had been over for some time. He told my son afterward, 'the heart was worn out and had simply stopped beating.'"

A Scotch essayist, whose extensive reading and interesting articles in connection with the military past, and especially biography, make his opinions valuable, commenting on the life and character of Humphreys, remarked: "General Humphreys must indeed have been a loss to the country and to his friends. I was looking at a biography of Skoboleff, translated from the Russian, and it struck me that there was a certain resemblance between them." Such undoubtedly was the case. Humphreys was in all but dandyism or display, the mannerism or phantasmagoria of war, the Skoboleff of the Army of the Potomac—the Russian in all his grandest characteristics, without any of those qualities, which, like over-ornamentation in any structure, detract from, rather than add to, a truly great man. To Humphreys may be applied emphatically the fine and pointed remark of Sallust concerning Jugurtha: "He was, indeed, both brave in action and wise in council; qualities very seldom united in the same person; precaution being generally accompanied with timidity and courage with rashness."

O'er his dear corpse a pyramid shall rise,
 Each stone a deed of duty bravely done:
 Vast in its height and tiers of massive size,
 Enchas'd with wreaths in battle nobly won,
 Capped with the cone, his science none denies—
 Pure in its casing, brilliant in the sun.
 Duty his motto: not what in men's eyes
 Glitters deceptive, glory, rarely won
 By honest merit; as a rule the prize
 Of charlatans, in courtier arts begun.
 He served his country—there his merit lies—
 From youth to age—like Barca's famous son.*

*Hannibal.

J. WATTS DE PEYSTER,
 Brev. Major General, S. N. Y.

Honorary member of Diognothian Literary Society
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ANDREW ATKINSON HUMPHREYS.

PART SECOND.

MILITARY SERVICES DURING THE "SLAVEHOLDERS' REBELLION."



TAKEN DURING THE WAR, WHEN ABOUT 52.

"AN Utility General." "The best of them all, after all." "The only engineer officer who had go ahead in him and did not think all the time of digging."—*A Veteran Officer of the New and Old World.*

"You have always told me *truth*—truth I could not obtain through any other channel."—*Emperor Alexander to Gen. Sir Robert Wilson, 1812.*

"If not in Poetry, at least in Fact,
And FACT is TRUTH, the great desideratum."

"All that a citizen could be I was ;
Raised by thy [his country's] will, *all thine in Peace
and War.*" —*Dryden.*

"More moderate gifts might have prolonged his date."

—————"I'd show you
How easy 'tis to die by my example,
And hansom Fate before you." —*Dryden.*

General Humphreys was born 2d November, 1810, and was graduated at the U. S. Military Academy, West Point, 1st July, 1831. From that date until the breaking

out of the "Slaveholders' Rebellion" the story of his Military Service follows the same course as that of a majority of our regular officers. The only fighting that he saw previous to the "Great American Conflict" was in the miserably mismanaged Seminole War in 1836. Of suffering he underwent a sufficiency. Disgusted, he resigned 30th September, 1836. For about two years he was a Civil Engineer in the U. S. service. On the 7th July, 1838, he was re-appointed in the U. S. Army as 1st Lieutenant in the corps of Topographical Engineers. Of the next twenty-three years each one was illustrated by some distinguished engineering achievement which won for him a reputation at home only exceeded by that which he acquired abroad.

When the "Slaveholders' Rebellion" broke out he was viewed with disfavor by the administration. He had been very intimate with the rebel president, Jefferson Davis, and others who rose to high political and military positions at the South. The same absurd suspicion which militated against George H. Thomas on account of his having been born in Virginia, was even more injurious to Humphreys on account of his previous social relations which in a great measure grew naturally out of his long term of engineering duties at the South. Even his astonishing feat of arms, his intrepidity and devotion at Fredericksburg, 13th December, 1862, did not relieve him from the odium of his prior accidental intimacies. It was not until he had again shown his superlative patriotism and manifested his hold upon his troops and his power of handling them upon the battle-field, to the admiration of the whole army, at Gettysburg, that he was made a Major General of Volunteers, 8th July, 1863. At that time he was outranked by officers of whom the great majority were

not only vastly inferior to him in every characteristic of a great soldier, but as incapable as the politicians of entertaining even the faintest estimate of his abilities.

Resuming in proper order his rise in active service, he was, as late as the 5th March, 1862, simply a Major of Topographical Engineers on the staff of the General-in-Chief,—that is even seven months after the first battle of Bull Run, when the impending perils of the country had developed themselves in all their vastness and when thousands of men with neither experience, capacity nor preparation were permitted to assume far more important duties than were entrusted to Humphreys. He accompanied McClellan to the Peninsula as Chief Topographical Engineer with the rank of Colonel, and it was only on the 28th April, 1862, he became Brigadier General of Volunteers. He was opposed to the “round-about raid;” the James river plan of McClellan, and is known to have urged the Urbanna route, so styled, if such a course was to be pursued. To those who have no maps it might be well to state that Urbanna is on the south bank of the Rappahannock, near its mouth. It is hard to perceive its advantages in the light of our present knowledge, but with such a magnificent army as McClellan commanded, the overland route was the best, if the campaign had commenced when it should have begun during the good weather of the Fall of 1862. With a leader of McClellan’s views any route was perhaps of equal advantage. Humphreys was a fighter with the same texture of thought and mode of action as Anthony Wayne. Would that there had been more like him!

He first shone on Malvern Hill. The posting of our troops on that field, 1st July, 1863, was, as a whole, entrusted to Humphreys and the duty was well performed. There the army gained a grand victory which its leader threw away; without any fault of his “Sergeant-Major of Battle” who had disposed and arranged the majority of the troops. The posting of the minority by another cost unnecessary fighting.

Just previous to Antietam, Humphreys was transferred from staff duty to the command of a division of new troops at Washington, a change he had long and ardently desired. With these, on the night prior to the battle, 17th September, 1862, he made a forced march, remarkable for its energy and expedition, spurred by the lively hope of being up in time to participate in the great battle impending. With all his ardor and

alacrity he was too late; no fault of his. On the 16th and 17th October he made a reconnaissance up the Shenandoah Valley to Kerneysville, Leetown and Smithfield, which was one of the most remarkably effective of the war. For this he was highly praised.

The fighting had then been going on East, West, or South, almost continuously for over nineteen months, and Humphreys had had no chance. He was now to have an opportunity to exhibit himself in the full splendor of his courage and leadership, and he improved it. With the Third division of the Fifth corps, he was ordered to storm the Rebel fortifications and position at Marye’s Heights. It is said that “in war and politics peril is the twin of security.” In this case the maxim was to prove fallacious. To anything but Fortune, favoring extraordinary valor, the Rebel positions were impregnable. The valor was displayed, but Fortune did not smile even faintly; she rather frowned darkly. This was on the evening of the First Battle of Fredericksburg, 13th December, 1862. The first attempt was made by French with the Third Division of the Second Corps. It was equivalent to the effort of a Forlorn Hope on a very large scale. French carried his front to within about 100 feet of the Ha! Ha! stone-wall which served as a scarp to the Rebel line of defence. He had to fall back, leaving behind him about half his command. Hancock, with the First Division, Second Corps, repeated the mad adventure. He, too, was driven back, having sacrificed about two-fifths of his effectives in that “evil quarter of an hour.” He had the trifling consolation that his dead and wounded lay some 25 or 30 feet nearer to the enemy than those of French.

Then Humphreys was put in. His division, like the third breaker upon a beach, left its traces of blood and wrecks a few paces further on, and nearer to the enemy than the preceding two, lingered longer, strove harder to maintain itself so far, and to accomplish the impossible. Finally it withdrew, singing in chorus, to show that although shattered physically, morally its spirits were unshaken. His charge will yet be blazoned forth in history as one of the noblest efforts of Northern resolution, or, as he expressed it, one of Kearny’s exhibitions of valor “magnificent.”

“Two horses were shot under the intrepid leader [Humphreys], who hastily mounted a third, and continued to ride about amid the rain of missiles, bearing a charmed life; his clothing was pierced and rent,

but his person was unhurt. Every officer of his staff but one, his son, was dismounted, and his horse was badly wounded. In vain Humphreys endeavored to halt his men as they turned slowly backward. In vain did he endeavor to remedy the disorder occasioned by the troops lying down whom [the divisions previously put in] he had been sent to support; in vain did he endeavor to induce them to rise and join in the charge, and with some bitterness he subsequently wrote that *had they been withdrawn before he moved forward a different result would have followed.*

Indeed, so near was he to carrying the wall and heights that the enemy were actually moving their guns out of the batteries, and on the right they were beginning to quit the wall." —Letter of Humphreys to William Swinton, May 10, 1866, *ut supra*.

While this slaughter was going on, the Rebels, perfectly sheltered, were heard to cry out, "Come on, Yanks; if you don't mind it, it doesn't hurt us." Afterwards on the second day of Gettysburg, the Rebels assaulting on the Union right near the cemetery, exclaimed, "The Yanks have got us this time; this is like their hopeless charge on Marye's Heights at Fredericksburg."

Here it is impossible to refrain from a few observations. The European world sounds and re-sounds, echoes and re-echoes with plaudits for the Rebel grand charge on the third day of Gettysburg. Such excessive applause is unjust to many similar exhibitions of Union determination. The assaults of French and of Hancock, but *particularly of HUMPHREYS*, were much more desperately brilliant; likewise the Union assault by the troops of Thomas on Bragg's centre on Mission Ridge at Chattanooga; likewise the capture of the Rebel bridge-head at Rappahannock Station; likewise the triumphant storm at the Spotsylvania Death Angle, which by writers generally is attributed to the effects of a surprise, whereas the Rebel General, Johnson, "*states emphatically that he was not surprised, that his division was ready in the trenches before the assaulting force made it appearance,*" &c. (Humphreys, 95.) If time and space permitted, example might be added to example. What is more, the Rebel assault in dense column upon the Union batteries at Charles City Cross Roads, 29th June, 1862, and upon the Union works at Corinth, were fully as fine exhibitions of pluck as that of Pickett's division. Foreign applause for the Rebels is all well enough. Emperors, kings, kinglings, and aristocracy abroad hated us because they were greedily looking forward to our ruin. To them the Northerners were "Mud-sills" and the Southerners "chivalry." The glamour of this factitious renown is due in a great measure to the first important history that appeared, which purported, by title, to be

one thing and in spirit was another thing, altogether. Then comes in that inexplicable subserviency to Southern assumption. Why should the North glorify the South that never glorifies it? It is very doubtful if there was ever a man born South under the influence of slavery—that is, one who could stand it and stay there and not come out of it—who could ever perceive the truth (that is "our rights," without regard to the rights of others), through the atmosphere of his interests, his prejudices and his passions, or do justice to the North when it clashed with them. Let us hurrah for our own people and applaud their greatness and goodness, and let the South hurrah for themselves. Judging from the past they will do enough of it. While I live I will avouch that our people behaved as bravely and accomplished as much as any people under similar circumstances on the face of the earth.

At Chancellorsville, 24th May, 1863, Humphreys, with his Third Division, Fifth Corps, held the extreme left of the Army of the Potomac under, or rather with, Hooker. His duty was simply that which Milton describes in the famous line of his sonnet XIX on his blindness:

"They also serve who only stand and wait."

Humphreys realized a great many of Milton's truisms that day.

"The paradise of fools to few unknown."

"My sentence is for open war."

"The hell within him;"

"All hell broke loose." [On our right].

He often related how he suffered for want of food (in the Wilderness at Chancellorsville), and how delicious something tasted which turned up at the right moment. That he did not do something "elegant" was no fault of his, but of his immediate superiors and the generals in chief command. If ever opportunities were wasted it was on this field Firstly Friday, April 30th, P. M., when the Fifth Corps pushed forward almost to Bank's Ford. The withdrawal of our troops on that day was one of the mistakes in war which seem utterly inexplicable. It was actually worse than neutralizing the brilliant results of the preceding magnificent initiative. Another chance lost was when Stuart advanced to attack Sickles at Hazel Grove and openly and persistently exposed his right flank to Meade and Reynolds. Mars and Bellona, god and goddess of war! What a chance was there for the Fifth and First Corps! Webb, with Meade, saw it and groaned over it then and since. Again, when Sedgwick had advanced to Salem Church, why was he

not reinforced or supported by attacks elsewhere? Oh! Oh! Oh! and all these corps commanders are held by the people as great generals.

Humphrey was very severe on Hooker. I never agreed with him in the extent of his condemnation. After Hooker was knocked over senseless, those next in rank were as much, if not more, to blame.

The judgment of the world has been very cruel upon Hooker. Sir Robert Wilson, Bart. in his "Narrative of Events during the Invasion of Russia" by Napoleon Bonaparte, (1812,) whom he detested, is much more generous. Speaking of the "Action before Loubino," August, 1812, (page 96) he observes: "The French historians affirm that Napoleon himself was not on this occasion so stirring, decided, and judicious as usual; *but genius, and aspirations which create and feed the excitement of the hero* as well as of the poet, *must occasionally slumber, for they animate but a mortal frame, subject to lassitude, internal derangement, and decay.*" As Lieut. Gen. Sir Robert Wilson, B. A., said of Barclay de Tolly, in 1812, "He was a brave soldier and a good officer, but *not a captain with a master-mind equal to the need.*" Most true and sympathetically manly.

The march of the Army of the Potomac from Chancellorsville to Gettysburg in June, 1863, was one of the most severe which it was ever called upon to make. It fell with extra severity upon the Third Corps, to which Humphreys had been transferred after the former battle and upon the division to which he had been assigned. He now commanded the Second Division in place of the gallant Berry, killed on the 2d May. There are some very curious, nay interesting, if not romantic, incidents connected with the march of Humphreys to the field of Gettysburg on the night of the 1st and 2d July. He actually got up, undiscovered, within a few yards of batteries on the left of the Rebel army on the ridge overlooking the Black Horse tavern on Marsh Creek. It was a moonlight night. A sudden attack in this quarter might have inflicted a terrible shock upon Lee. God knows best and all is for the best. He intended that the Rebels should receive a crashing defeat on the ensuing days, whereas a partial night attack might have simply compelled the Rebels to shift their battle-ground—have "tumbled them out" of a weak into a strong position. Within 24 hours they were reinforced with their best troops. Then, if a battle was to occur, Meade might have had to attack, and

all the advantages would have been with the Rebels. In the development of the inevitable decree of God, it seemed as if the war was to be protracted until the veterans of Rebeldom were destroyed and its power for mischief ended—until "the cradle and the grave" were robbed of their last available "food for the cannon," just as there was no hope of peace for Europe, until the "hordes of disciplined savages" with which the accursed despot Napoleon had made his wars, maintained war, had perished in Russia. The miracles of the Supreme Ruler always appear to have been effected by law, through natural means, and though "His mills grind slowly," they eventually "grind exceedingly small." In assaulting as he did, but particularly on the 3rd, Lee seemed to have become insane and "whom the gods would destroy they first make mad."

However, this is not a regular military criticism, and speculation upon the "ifs" and the "whys" is without utility here. Humphreys was a "duty man." Undiscovered, in obedience to precise orders, he retraced his steps and countermarched to take up a position on the left of the Union Army, where he was to assist in the great battle of next day, 2d July, THE DAY, on which he played so distinguished a part.

In regard to Gettysburg, General Humphreys, in his Address at the Meade Memorial Meeting, Philadelphia, 18th November, 1872, makes this criticism: "You all know how the battle on the second day went on, and that *the hardest fighting of the three days of battle took place on it*, [especially that done by Humphreys' division]. Lee attacked our left with Longstreet's corps and part of Hill's, under the cover of woods which concealed their approach, and a long-continued, desperate struggle ensued, lasting from half-past four until seven o'clock, in which we lost the advanced part of the ground we had taken up; but the main position remained intact."

It was this same battle drew from Humphreys' pen the following remarks, in the same address, which develop fully how strong in him were the instincts of a warrior: "Of all the sublime sights within the view and comprehension of man, the grandest, the most sublime is a great battle. Its sights and sounds arouse a feeling of exaltation, compared to which, tame indeed is the sense of the sublime excited by all other great works, either of God or man. No grander sight was seen throughout the war than this great bat-

tle between two brave, well disciplined and ably commanded armies."

Before quitting the subject of Gettysburg, it may be justifiable to remark that I do not believe that any one living outside of his own family was more intimate with Humphreys than myself. Ever since the battle there has been a furious controversy between the friends of Sickles and of Meade as to the action of the former and its influence upon the result. No expression, to remembrance, ever fell from the lips of Humphreys reflecting upon Sickles, and he always remarked that while he was willing to serve under that officer, nothing would induce him to remain in a position subordinate to any who were likely to succeed him, Birney particularly. Therefore, Sickles being severely wounded and not likely to return, although Humphreys had an intense desire to remain in the active command of troops, he determined to accept the position of Chief of Staff to Meade, and, as such, he continued with him so long, because he could not get a command such as he thought due to himself.

When Grant became Lieutenant-General and assumed the immediate supervision of the Army of the Potomac, and the reduction of the number of the corps and their consolidation was broached, Humphreys was opposed to it for many reasons, but particularly on the same grounds for which Lee preferred organizations which were equivalent to small corps in his army, because they were more manageable or handy, and better adapted to a wooded country like Virginia, where immediate command or even supervision was so difficult and limited in extent. Meade gave Humphreys to understand that even if the corps were to continue as they were, small and compact, acclimated to the severest service, annealed, so to speak, he, Humphreys, would not get one of them under any circumstances. That is the sole reason that Humphreys remained so long with Meade as Chief of Staff. As soon as he could get away he did so, but it was not until 24th November, 1864, when he succeeded Hancock in the command of the combined Second-Third Corps. He always gave me to understand that Meade had not done him due justice; that the whole burthen of the direction, except general expressions, had rested with him for sixteen months, and the people had no idea of the strain he had undergone or the work he had done. On reading what might be styled his Obituary Address upon Meade, the effect was aston-

ishment. All Meade's offences were condoned, and when Humphreys' two books came out, the astonishment was still greater. To one who knew the very inward workings of the soul of Humphreys there was only one solution. In action he was one of the most decided of men; and his indignation often flamed up. On the other hand, in calmer moods he was one of the gentlest of men—magnanimity itself. This dual nature is the only explanation of his views as expressed at different times. I know that in one engagement an officer of high rank behaved very badly. When Humphreys wrote his report he denounced him in the strongest language. When the report was made public everything severe had been expunged. On another occasion an officer of high rank disobeyed him and was immediately superseded. In his published report there was scarcely any, if any, reference to the matter. There could have been no reason for this but magnanimity, because Humphreys did not fear the face of clay, and it is questionable if he took anything else into account.

During what Mr. Swinton styles a "Campaign of Manœuvres," that is, the operations of the fall or autumn of 1863 and winter of 1863-64, Humphreys must have been bitterly exercised in soul. He always maintained that during this period he had three or four chances to make a splendid reputation, and that if his plans had been followed Lee would have been severely handled if not utterly defeated. In the first case, Meade listened to bad advice, but finally yielded to the counsel of Humphreys. The latter issued orders which, if they had been followed, would have enabled the Army of the Potomac to deliver exactly such blows against the Army of Northern Virginia as those which Napoleon struck with such terrible success against Blucher's Army of Silesia at Champ-Aubert, Montmirail and Vaux-Champs, three principal successes, but in reality five, on the 10th, 11th and 12 February, 1814, and sent it reeling and writhing and whirling, but still struggling desperately and nobly, back whence it had started, to Chalons on the Marne.

Humphreys used to wring his hands metaphorically in relating how he had provided against every contingency, and for insuring success sent aides and messengers to enjoin obedience; and, then at the critical moment and point on which everything turned, he was disobeyed and failure followed.

The next occasion lost was at Mine Run. Humphreys declared that if he had been

clothed with sufficient power after Mine Run he would have shot those who had been the principal causes of the failure of his unexceptional plan for the campaign or operation.

On the third occasion Humphreys was even more disheartened. Meade was absent. Humphreys had learned that Lee's forces were very much dislocated and open to surprise. He at once drew up a plan which he felt, if it was instantly carried into execution, would be glorious for the country, triumphant for the army, and bring renown to him. Butler was to make a simultaneous movement up the Peninsula to distract Lee's attention. Humphreys hastened to the general who commanded in the absence of Meade, submitted his plans, with his orders all digested and prepared for the necessary movement of the occasion. "Wait till Meade gets back." When Meade got back it was too late. "Crushed again!" thought Humphreys, as Lady Jane remarks in "Patience;" "crushed again!"

NOTE.—All just and intelligible allusions to this plan of Humphreys seem wanting in general history. Col. Fletcher, B. A., refers to it as follows:

"Pending the concentration of the great armies, an attempt was made by a *coup de main* to obtain possession, if only temporary, of the city, for whose capture so many thousand lives had already been sacrificed. A scheme was devised by which, whilst the attention of General Lee was engaged in watching a feint of the army of the Rapidan, General Butler, in command of the forces at Yorktown, strengthened by reinforcements from Charleston, should surprise Richmond, release the prisoners confined in the Libby Prison, and thus, whilst settling the difficulties of the exchange, should accomplish a deed attempted in vain by so many able commanders. The expedition, as might have been expected, failed; on the 5th of February, General Sedgwick, in temporary command of the Army of the Potomac, made a *reconnaissance* across the Rapidan; but finding the enemy well prepared to receive him, returned after inflicting and sustaining some slight loss." History of the American War, by Lieut.-Colonel Fletcher; Scots Fusilier Guards, Vol. iii; Third and Fourth Years of the War (Concluding Volume); London: Richard Bentley, New Burlington Street. Published in Ordinary to her Majesty, 1866. Pages 185-6.

The fourth opportunity lost was when Kilpatrick failed to go into Richmond, Tuesday, 1st March, 1864. Humphreys is emphatic here in his "Gettysburg to the Rapidan," 77-78; the only force opposed to him [Kilpatrick] was 500 men with six field guns, and had he made a determined charge, he would have taken Richmond and accomplished the object of his expedition," not least of which was the liberation of our distressed fellow-citizens, prisoners on that accursed Belle Island and in Libby. "Consid-

ering the circumstances under which he was before Richmond, it was incumbent upon him [Kilpatrick] to have dismounted his command, and to have led it in person in an assault upon the entrenchments."

It is useless to attempt to go into any details of the Overland or Wilderness Campaign, or Siege of Petersburg, commencing 3d-5th May, 1864. The masses have elected to believe that as generals, Alexander, Hannibal, Cæsar, Frederic, and even Napoleon, were fools to Grant and Lee. A great many close observers, deep readers, and acute judges do not believe any such thing. Sherman's advance to Atlanta was much better managed, than the "bloody sap," styled the Wilderness campaign; but then Sherman had Thomas with him (using the latter's expression to me) "to serve as a balance-wheel."

If anything was well done, it was due to Humphreys' energy and accuracy. One of the bravest and most truthful of men attached to headquarters, who kept a diary, said that Grant expressed to Meade what he wanted done in the concisest terms, and this Meade transmitted to Humphreys. Humphreys says he drew up every order for the movements of that vast army under the most difficult and aggravating* circumstances. Humphreys reveals, reading between the lines, that Lee—overestimated as the man always is—was nevertheless always beforehand with Grant, and more than a match for him, and that Grant won all that he did win with a prodigal waste of blood in which the country seemed willing to acquiesce, and to have its soldiers perish so that another billion was saved. Moreau and Kleber styled Napoleon "a general at six thousand (or ten thousand) lives a day." Apply that arithmetic to the Wilderness Campaign. People in office dare not speak out.

Simplicity in war is sometimes sublime, but it is not the "*sancta simplicitas*"—bigoted weakness of intellect, as the term was used by John Huss in regard to the old woman who helped to burn him—and by Sir Hudson Lowe as to Napoleon's movements at Waterloo.

On several questions General Humphreys and I had long, often-repeated and very lively discussions. I always held, and still hold, that when Grant crossed the Rapidan to inaugurate the Wilderness Campaign, he ought

*When Humphreys' "Virginia Campaign of 1864-5" appeared he sent a copy to Grant, which was never acknowledged, and in his "Personal Memoirs," Grant (who scarcely mentions (only four times and one paragraph, 1,255-6) his fortune-maker, Rawlins) classes Humphreys unequally and damns him with the faintest praise, considering the services he rendered.

to have turned Lee's position by a flank movement to the right. Humphreys discusses the same matter at pages 9-10 of his "Virginia Campaigns of '64-'65." It is impossible to enter upon a critical discussion without maps, but *any* map will show the positions of Gordonsville and Charlottesville, the importance of which in regard to an advance upon Richmond, General Kearny saw in 1861. It is admitted that the Union Army could carry fifteen days' supplies in its wagon-trains, and within that space of time how many bloody battles were fought on the other line selected by Grant? At page 17 the strength of the Rebel army is given at 61,953, and at pages 13-14 Grant's Army of the Potomac given at 99,438, besides the Ninth Corps which, *de facto*, belonged to it and was about 22,000 men, (14, note) making an aggregate of say 121,000. These were about the relative forces under Sherman and Thomas, 100,000; and those under Johnston, 55,000, on the Atlanta Line, 1st May, 1864. There the course followed, was to hold with a force sufficiently strong to be able to take care of itself, and flank with a force equally able to take care of itself on an emergency. I have discussed this matter with a number of Regular officers. General Thomas told me that if General Sherman had allowed him instead of McPherson to make the Snake Creek Gap movement, 7th May, that campaign would have ended almost as soon as it began, *i. e.*, the very next day, with the annihilation, or rather, perhaps, dispersion of Johnston's army, and capture of its material of every kind. Humphreys, arguing in favor of Grant, admits that to move by the Union right flank would take us through a more open and cultivated country, and that is just where the Union troops always had the Rebels. Moving by the Union left was plunging into the Wilderness, literally, and there we lost all the advantages of our numbers and gave every advantage to the enemy. Turn to the battle-plans of Hohenlinden, and there is an analogous case. Moreau's lieutenants, especially Richepanse, struck the Austrians very much as the Rebels struck Grant. Again, in the course of the operations of the 10th, 11th, 12th February, already alluded to, which redeemed Napoleon's madness and blunders in 1814, the very same strategy, grand tactics and tactics which inflicted such terrible losses on the Army of Silesia were similar to Lee's principles of action at the beginning of the Wilderness fights. The movement by our right would have been

across the shallower and narrower headwaters of the streams which proved such obstructions on the other line, nor was the country filled in that direction with defensive works. If Lee, alarmed, did not stand fast to fight a battle, but fell back on Richmond, the distance between the Rapidan on our right was not greater than from Fredericksburg on our left. If Lee accepted battle immediately toward Charlottesville, as he did in the Wilderness, fifteen days' supplies were amply sufficient for our army. There are a great many who think that the Wilderness campaign was a blunder, a bloody blunder, and it looked very much like it, and the more it is examined in the light of subsequent events, the more-so it appears. Reading Humphreys' book between the lines, the text makes the fact absolutely clear that Lee saw through Grant's moves, and was always up in time, if not beforehand, with him. We did a brilliant thing at the Spottsylvania death-angle, because there were grounds somewhat open. It would have been altogether more open on the right flank route, and the Army of the Potomac always had the Rebels sure, when they caught them in the open. With Rebel assumption of their superiority to the Union troops in fighting qualities, there is hardly a doubt that Lee would have given or accepted battle. If he had hesitated his Hotspurs and "yellow-jackets" would have pressed it. In fact, Humphreys publicly declared 18th November, 1872, it was the conviction of the Army of Northern Virginia that it could beat the Army of the Potomac wherever it found it. In a pitched battle, immediately, and in an open country, with Grant in command, who would have fought it out to the bitter end, superiority of numbers and artillery must have told, and all things being equal then and there would have ended the existence of the Army of Northern Virginia.

I have heard able and patriotic Regular generals who had been severely under fire, criticise that campaign in a way that would have done good to the heart of any real military critic like the Archduke Charles, von Bulow, or Jomini. The real manipulation of the Army of the Potomac, as far as depended on the reduction of orders for sixteen months, must be credited to Humphreys. As far as healthily digested orders influence, all the credit was his.

Before Petersburg the combined 2d-3d Corps, whether under Hancock or Birney, as the policemen sing in the "Pirates of Penzance," "did not have a happy time." They did have a happy time after Humphreys took

command, and afterwards they were a very strong quantity in the equation which settled the fate of Lee. The inside story of the "how" and the "why" and the "when" of the "VENIT SUMMA DIES" of the evacuation of Petersburg and the capture of Richmond has never been told. Self-interest and moral timidity keep a great many mouths shut and pens in the racks.

In turning of key which opened the Rebel lock in the direction of Five Forks, that is on our left, Humphreys exerted strength and ability. He saw clearly what ought to be done. So did Sheridan, who has a mighty clear head, and not only knows how to deliver a body-blow, but is one who can put it in with terrible effect.

Once launched in pursuit of Lee, Humphreys played the most important part. Between the 24th November, 1864, and the 9th April, 1865, about four and one-half months, was all the time that was accorded to Humphreys while he was Corps Commander to show to the world what was in him, and in this short time he proved that it was. Yes, perhaps all that was necessary to exhibit his perfect capacity for command of troops was the last two weeks of the fighting. Napoleon made Generals, Princes and Marshals for less than Humphreys accomplished during that short period.

As Parton says, with by far less reason (127) of Aaron Burr, was eminently true of Humphreys: "If he had been as much in the eye of Napoleon as he was in Washington's, the Emperor would have made a Marshal of him, and he would have shared with Napoleon his splendid immortality."

High-for-Newton as regards its object. Let us look into it, however, if true, as it manifestly is, in the case of Humphreys.

The day will come when true military criticism will judge correctly of the retreat of Lee and the pursuit of Grant. Neither deserved the praise lavished upon them. That Grant ever overtook Lee at all was entirely owing to Lee's unnecessary delays and indecision. The Rebel troops did all that men could do. The leader in ability was not worthy of them. As I said in my remarks on "Bridging and Forging," in connection with the fight at Cumberland Church, ~~one~~ one thing is certain, the Rebels, during the retreat from Petersburg were never stam-peded. Stupid from want of sleep, beat out through fatigue, exhausted from want of food, staggered by constant driving and defeat at every stand they may have been—but *stampeded, never.* Wonderful, wonderful

breed of men! How they fought; although they recognized from the first, as they said to me, more than once, near the field of Chancellorsville, "We knew it was the rich man's war and the poor man's fight." The Rebel civil and military administrative functionaries were still more to blame;—in fact, in some respects, altogether to blame. If Lee had found provisions at Amelia Court House, and kept moving, the pursued would have distanced the pursuers.

When Lee evacuated Petersburg, circumstances were very much the same as after Ligny in 1815. Like the Rebels here, the Prussians there, had been defeated and "trundled out" of their positions, worsted but not demoralized. They retreated; the night swallowed up all traces of them, and Napoleon was at a loss to know what route they had taken. It was exactly so in 1865. At Jetersville, three days after the evacuation of Petersburg-Richmond, Sheridan expected to be attacked by Lee, and Lee at one time entertained the idea of such a return to the aggressive. On the night of the 5th April, the Army of the Potomac was pretty much up in full strength. Now refer to the accompanying map, and although it is on a very small scale, it reveals the situation clearly.

On the morning of the 6th Grant started the three Corps which he had with him in such directions that if HUMPHREYS had not discovered the Army of Northern Virginia, in the direction of Amelia Salt Sulphur Springs, moving rapidly across his front, to the westward, the Union infantry would have been entirely thrown out. The cavalry could have harassed Lee, but they could not have handled his infantry which would have defied them. The Fifth Corps in their circuitous march 6th to 9th April did not come in contact with the enemy. Even the Sixth Corps, which in conjunction with the Cavalry won so much credit at Little Sailor's Creek, did not encounter Lee's main body,—which Humphreys was fighting all day—but only a portion of it, split off, late in the afternoon by Humphreys' persistent sledge-hammer strokes. This was near the J. Holt house, where Humphreys put in a section of guns at Sheridan's request. (Refer to the map.) Humphreys first struck Lee near Amelia Salt Sulphur Springs, having come up with him partly by fording Flat Creek, armpit deep, partly by restoring a bridge. This stream is 80 to 100 feet wide. Thereafter the fighting continued for eleven hours, over 14 miles, until night closed upon a

“heavy battle” at the junction of Sailor’s Creek, proper, and the Appomattox. Again and again, the Rebel rear guard attempted to take up positions and restrain the ardor of Humphreys’ unremitting pursuit, but in vain. The map or plan develops what occurred better than it can be described. How many men Lee actually had with him is very much disputed. Humphreys, a man of figures as well as of fighting, went into a careful investigation of these numbers. On the morning of the 6th, Lee must have had over 40,000 men; Humphreys had about 19,000.

As said before, Lee in his retreat showed how little of a general he was. Had he made one of von Bulow’s eccentric retreats he might have given us infinite trouble; had he sacrificed his baggage, had he even utilized the stores he did possess he might have protracted the war to a point that might have given the South by arms what they have since recovered through the weakness and stupidity of our politicians at the North. This retreat, if everything in his whole career failed to prove it demonstrated he had no adventure, no adaptiveness, no originality of mind. It was not even the retreat of a pedant nor of an academician, much less of an expert. It was simply an obstinate rushing on until caught in a net, such as should have been set on the 6th to take him on the 7th. So Sir Robt. Wilson foresaw the hopelessness of a general “engaged in a stern chase after Tome, of which he never more could gain or keep the lead.”

As von Clausewitz says—referring to the concen-



tration, ordered and expected, upon Napoleon at the Beresina "*the threads were now gathering up into the final knot.*" Lee's Beresina should have been at Cumberland Church. Why it was postponed to Appomattox Court House is not one of the secrets pigeon-holed by red-tape to which Metternich alludes, but one of those which can never be solved through the dissolution of the mortal brain that conceived and held it.

If people personally interested would only abide by impartial criticism and not allow passion to interfere, it would be found that the influence of the cavalry upon the capture of Lee was small. They did gobble large slices of his *impedimenta*—"impedimenta belli et fuga"—admirably expressive now in every language—but de Trobriand and others aver that a great many of the captured wagons contained *trash*. Indeed it is wonderful, that, when to escape it was necessary to strip, what an enormous amount of stuff the Rebels dragged after them.

On the evening of the 6th, Wright and Sheridan had captured Ewell's Corps; Mahone's (Rebel) division, which had been transferred to Longstreet's command, had repulsed the Union cavalry in the direction of High Bridge; Longstreet had about destroyed a detachment of the army of the James near Rice's Station; and Humphreys fought a final heavy battle at Perkinson's Mills, to which complete darkness alone put an end. Night again afforded respite to Lee.

Next morning with first light, Humphreys moved again, found the enemy in force, between 8 and 9 o'clock, at High Bridge; drove them across, captured and saved it. About 1 P. M. with two divisions—he had detached a third division to follow up a column retreating on Farmville—Humphreys came up with the whole of the remains of the army of Northern Virginia, concentrated and strongly entrenched at Cumberland Church and there he held them until night and, then and there, Lee's army might have been and should have been destroyed.

The telegrams and despatches of that day have been collected, collated and published. At 2.20 P. M. enough troops were collected at Farmville to swarm Lee out. Farmville is only about 3 miles from where Humphreys was holding Lee. The excuse for not taking advantage of circumstances, and thus then and there overwhelming Lee, was that the river was not fordable and the bridge over it burned. With a large village or townlet at

hand to furnish materials, with many large trees about, and with thousands of teams and competent hands ready and willing, the river, about 100 feet wide, say 125, could and should have been bridged within two hours. Besides other methods, a cantilever bridge, using the abutments of the burned viaduct, would have been most simple, easy and speedy. To the objection that the Appomattox was not fordable there were living refutations at the time and on the spot. Fitz Lee's whole cavalry forded on the morning of the 7th. Crook's division of cavalry, with its trains and artillery, in the early afternoon forded belly deep, was surprised, came to grief, and re-crossed by fording at Farmville again. The map shows the Old Plank Road, mid-way forking into two roads, by which and across country the 6th Corps and the 24th Corps, (and the 5th Corps?) could have been thrown entire by 5 o'clock in the rear of Lee's position and there with energy and will—there where the last stand-up fight between the army of Northern Virginia and the combined or consolidated 2nd and 3rd Corps under Humphreys, representing the Army of the Potomac, took place—*there* at Cumberland Church, on the 7th April, the main army of the Rebellion should have been consumed in a blaze of glory and not allowed to get off, and keep on for about 40 miles and 40 hours to quietly surrender on the 9th April, Palm Sunday, at Appomattox Court House.

The operations and pursuit of the Rebel forces this day, (7th April) by the combined Second and Third Corps alone, and the fight with Lee's whole remaining army at Cumberland Church, may recall to the reader, well posted in history, the attempted escape of Admiral Decres in the William Tell, eighty-six guns, on the 30th March, 1800, from Malta. (Brenton iii, 19-20). Pursued by the blockading fleet, the French Leviathan was overhauled by the British frigate Penelope, thirty-six guns, which although nearly annihilated by the tremendous broad-side of its gigantic antagonist, *inflicted such damage upon the latter as to cripple it and ensure its capture*. Or, to institute a parallel nearer home, let the reader recall the pursuit of the frigate President—"a seventy-four in disguise" by a British squadron in January 1815, (Cooper's History of the United States Navy, ii Chapter 26). Overhauled by the Endymion, a twenty-four gun ship, which boldly threw itself in the way, the United States vessel *was sufficiently injured to render escape impossible*, and even our Decatur

shortly after found himself compelled to surrender.

Lee, likewise, must have put a high estimate on the situation at Cumberland Church or Heights of Farmville, 7th April, 1865, P. M., since he remained in person on the ground till very late, if not till next morning; for during the night Grant's first proposition to Lee, requesting his surrender, was forwarded through Humphreys' line and then through Mahone's, under a flag of truce, or rather under a red light, as a flag could not be seen.

That Lee dreamed he had accomplished something of importance in holding his own against Humphreys would seem to be attested by the fact that he was "encouraged by the ephemeral gleam of success," (Draper iii, 588) to dream again of eventual triumph. That Lee was even yet sanguine of escaping to renew the struggle, seems to be the spirit of all the Southern authorities, and a correspondent stated (29, 8, 71), that one of the orderlies belonging to Lee's headquarters, wounded and captured on the 8th of April, "was sanguine of success, and firmly believed that our army would be totally defeated."

Now laying aside all bias and partiality, let each reader ask himself if the history of our own war presents a more glorious exhibition of the spirits of the true soldier at the head of a body worthy a Lancelotic leader than that of Humphreys at Cumberland Church? Whoever fought the Army of Northern Virginia under such disadvantages without ruing the day? The writer will not say fought Lee, because he does not believe in him; but fought Longstreet, grim and doughty; Gordon, able and fiery; Mahone, spiteful and dangerous as a tiger; not to mention others who for years had upborne the Stars and Bars with unwavering constancy and rare capacity. That such as these did not crush Humphreys is the marvel; that he kept such as these up to their work from noon till dark is the greatest marvel. For half that Spring day he was at them,

watching them as the panther the buffalo, harassing, attacking, bleeding them, and only prevented from the fatal spring because he did not have the buffalo's relative weight and strength to make the spring fatal and the rush profitable. Take Mahone's testimony, and the evidence shows that Bratton's brigade in reserve was needed at every point throughout the afternoon.

Humphreys gave the enemy no respite. His sword's point was always ready for an unguarded aperture or a loosened rivet.

Had any of our Generals done this before?

Grant's first summons for Lee to surrender was sent through Humphrey's lines at dark, and all the subsequent notes passed through Humphreys' lines until Lee was actually brought to bay at Appomattox Court House. Why? Because Humphreys was always nearest to Lee, pressing him, depleting him, holding him. When the last stand was made, Humphreys was again close upon Longstreet's corps or division, and, unquestionably, if he had not been restrained by orders, he would have annihilated the force opposed to him. I have always maintained that Lee was not the great general Southerners and dough-faces have claimed, nor equal to Albert Sydney Johnston or Joseph E. Johnston. Lee had every advantage. Among these, the best army and the best—most appropriate—field for it. I have also held that there were more able Generals at the North than at the South, judging of the latter by those who were permitted to become prominent, because there was as much personal and political favoritism at the South as at the North; and that in the Union army, the best and greatest were George H. Thomas, whose only fault, if it was a fault, was, he would take time, and that other one, who was always up to time and never behind-hand anywhere or in anyway, Andrew Atkinson Humphreys.

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